



US Army Corps of Engineers
Omaha District

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
&
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**CONTROL OF EURASIAN WATER MILFOIL
FORT PECK PROJECT AREA, VARIOUS COUNTIES, MONTANA**

May 2011

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**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
CONTROL OF EURASIAN WATER MILFOIL
FORK PECK PROJECT AREA, VARIOUS COUNTIES, MONTANA
May 2011**

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and implementing regulations, an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for control of Eurasian Watermilfoil at the Fort Peck Project Area in various counties in Montana. The purpose of this project is to control the spread of the Class 3 noxious weed. The Fort Peck Project is eligible to control this noxious weed in accordance with the National Invasive Species Act and the Corps Invasive Species Policy Memorandum dated June 2, 2009. The exact project sites where control will occur are located throughout the Fork Peck Project Area where Eurasian Watermilfoil has been identified.

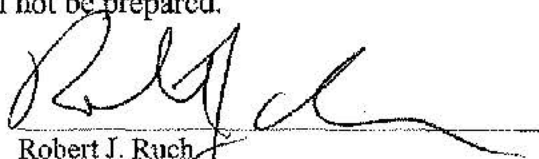
Three alternatives were considered: the Preferred Alternative, a lake drawdown, and the No Action Alternative. The No Federal Action alternative would result in no control of the noxious plant species. The No Action alternative was eliminated from further consideration because if left unchecked, the plant would continue to grow and expand into new areas of the project, and negatively impact recreation, irrigation, fish and wildlife species, and the habitat upon which they depend. Given the size of Fort Peck Lake and the amount of water that would be need to be released to adequately expose, freeze, and kill Eurasian Watermilfoil, the lake drawdown alternative was eliminated from further consideration. The proposed alternative is preferred because it helps to control the spread of Eurasian Watermilfoil and protects area resources.

The preferred alternative consists of a combination of control options and includes herbicide applications, suction dredging, mechanical control, hand removal, and bottom barriers. All of these methods have proven effective at controlling small stands of the noxious plant.

The EA and comments received from the resource agencies were used to determine whether the proposed action would require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement. All environmental, social, and economic factors relevant to the proposal were considered in this assessment. These included, but were not necessarily limited to, water quality, air quality, noise, wetlands, wildlife, threatened and endangered species, and cultural resources. No significant adverse impacts to these resources will occur. The proposed action will be in compliance with applicable environmental statutes.

It is my finding, based on the EA, that the proposed Federal activity will not have any significant adverse impacts on the environment and that the proposed project will not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

Date: 10 May 11


Robert J. Ruch
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESMENT
CONTROL OF EURASIAN WATER MILFOIL
FORT PECK PROJECT AREA, VARIOUS COUNTIES, MONTANA**

May 2011

1. PROJECT AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

1.1 Authority

The authorities for this project are the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act of 2007 and the Corps Invasive Species Policy Memorandum dated June 2, 2009. These authorities allow the prevention and control of invasive species. Additionally, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Invasive Species Policy Memorandum allows the Corps to prevent or reduce the establishment of invasive and non-native species as a component of all Corps Operations and Maintenance at project sites and as part of the implementation of Civil Works projects.

1.2 Purpose & Need

The purpose of the proposed project is to control the spread of the noxious Eurasian Watermilfoil at the Fort Peck Project Area in various counties in Montana. Control would incorporate various methods determined by site specific infestations. The need for the proposed project is to protect area recreation, irrigation, water quality, fish and wildlife, and the habitat upon which Fort Peck Project Area species depend.

1.3 Project Location

The proposed project is located at the Fort Peck Project Area in McCone, Valley, Garfield, Phillips, Petroleum, and Fergus counties, Montana. Fort Peck is the nation's fourth largest manmade reservoir and backs up from the dam at the city of Fort Peck approximately 135 river miles to the west and south.

2. ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Alternative 1 – Eurasian Watermilfoil Control (Preferred)

Proposed control options would be determined based on the size and location of the infested area. Methods would consist of herbicide treatments, suction dredging, mechanical control, hand removal, and/or bottom barriers.

2.1.1 Herbicides

Aquatic herbicides are applied as concentrated liquids, granules or pellets. Liquid treatments are mixed with water to facilitate application and to ensure even distribution. Aquatic herbicides are applied to the entire water column to control the submersed weeds. Some dry formulations also are mixed with water, but many granular and pellet products are applied using granular

spreaders. Aquatic herbicide applicators must measure the volume of the water to be treated before applying aquatic herbicides to ensure that the appropriate and effective amount of herbicide is used. Some types of herbicides that are used to effectively control Eurasian Watermilfoil and proposed for use at the Fort Peck Project Area are listed below. A brief description of two different types of aquatic herbicides also is provided.

Contact Herbicides. These are herbicides that result in the rapid injury or death of contacted plant tissues and lack mobility within plant tissues once taken into the plant tissue. Contact herbicides can be used to temporarily control emergent aquatic plants such as Eurasian Watermilfoil. These treatments are often initially effective, but treating large emergent plants with a contact herbicide often results in rapid recovery and significant re-growth from plant tissues that do not come into contact with the herbicide. As a result, systemic products (described below) are usually preferred for controlling emergent plants because systemic herbicides move or translocate within the plant and kill underground roots and rhizomes, which reduces or eliminates re-growth.

Diquat. Diquat is a fast-acting contact herbicide that disrupts photosynthesis in susceptible plant species. Diquat is used to control submersed plants in small treatment areas or in areas where dilution may reduce the period of time that plants are exposed to the herbicide. Diquat is generally considered to be a “broad-spectrum” product that kills a wide range of plant species. However, the susceptibility of different submersed species can vary significantly. Diquat can be rapidly inactivated when treating “muddy” or turbid water and the speed of this inactivation can interfere with plant control. There are no hard and fast rules to determine when water is too muddy to treat, but the effectiveness of Diquat increases as water clarity increases. Diquat is often mixed with copper-based herbicides to control a broader range of weeds and to improve control of target plants.

Endothall. Endothall is used primarily to control submersed plants and use rates and methods of application vary significantly. Traditional use patterns of Endothall have included spot treatments of small target areas with a granular product. These spot treatments are generally applied at the highest label rate when species selectivity is not a major concern. Selective use of the product is based on species sensitivity, use rates and treatment timing. The effectiveness of Endothall is generally not affected by factors such as alkalinity or turbidity of the water. Within the last several years, large-scale early-season treatments have been applied to target invasive plants such as Eurasian Watermilfoil. These treatments are conducted before desirable native plants begin to grow in spring, which may allow control of the invasive weeds with limited impact on native species that grow later in the season. It is important to note that these early-season treatments are applied when plant biomass is not at its peak and when water temperatures are cooler. These conditions reduce or prevent oxygen depletion that may occur when fast-acting contact herbicides are applied to dense nuisance populations of weeds in warmer water.

Systemic Herbicides. As briefly discussed above, systemic herbicides are mobile in plant tissue and move through the plant’s water-conducting vessels (xylem) or food-transporting vessels (phloem). Once the herbicide is absorbed into the plant, it can move through one or both of these vessels and throughout the plant tissue to affect all portions of the plant, including underground roots and rhizomes. In contrast to the contact herbicides discussed above which are used to

control a large number of nuisance and invasive plant species, the below listed systemic herbicides are used for a much smaller plant spectrum, particularly Eurasian Watermilfoil.

2, 4-D. 2, 4-D has been used to selectively control Eurasian Watermilfoil. A liquid amine formulation is used to control emergent and submersed plants and a granular ester formulation is used for submersed weed control. Some native emergent plants including water lilies, spatterdock and bulrush are susceptible to 2, 4-D, so care should be taken to avoid injury to these plants.

Triclopyr. Triclopyr was registered for aquatic use in 2002 and to date the major use of his herbicide has been for selective control of Eurasian Watermilfoil. Similar to 2, 4-D, there are other plant species that are susceptible to Triclopyr so care should be taken to avoid injury to these plants. Triclopyr is registered as both liquid and granular amine formulations. The use of Triclopyr in public waters is permitted in some states where 2,4-D use is not allowed.

Fluridone. Fluridone is a bleaching herbicide that targets a plant specific enzyme that protects chlorophyll, the green pigment responsible for photosynthesis in plants. Fluridone is the only herbicide registered by the EPA that is labeled only for use in aquatic systems and it is used primarily to control submersed (e.g., Eurasian Watermilfoil, hydrilla, and egeria) and floating plants (e.g., duckweed, watermeal and salvinia) by treating the water column instead of the foliage of the plants.

Fluridone symptoms are unique and highly visible, with the new growth of sensitive plants bleaching or turning white as chlorophyll in the plant is destroyed by sunlight. Susceptible plants will show bleaching symptoms in new shoot growth; however, it is important to note that bleaching symptoms don't always equal control and actual plant death may not occur for months after an initial treatment.

Fluridone has been described as both a selective and broad-spectrum herbicide because use rates can vary from 4 to 150 ug/L. Higher rates often provide broad-spectrum control, whereas lower rates effectively control only a few species. The Fluridone label states that target weeds must be exposed to Fluridone for a minimum of 45 days. Required exposure periods will often depend on the plant species, stage of plant growth and treatment timing. During the exposure period, new shoot growth of susceptible plants becomes bleached and this continuous bleaching of new growth depletes the plant's reserves of carbohydrates needed for growth. This slow death (which may take 2 or more months) can be beneficial to the environment because plants continue to provide structure for habitat and produce oxygen through photosynthesis. The inhibition of weed growth can also allow native plants to re-grow if they are naturally tolerant of Fluridone, but re-growth is highly dependent on herbicide rate. The extended exposure requirement typically calls for treatment of the entire aquatic system or treatment of protected embayments of lakes or reservoirs.

Despite the extended herbicide exposure requirements associated with Fluridone treatments, there are no restrictions for potable water use, fishing or swimming; however, irrigation restrictions are described on the product label. The ability to apply low use rates in the part per billion range, extended exposure requirements and slow plant death have allowed

Fluridone to be used for numerous whole-lake management treatments throughout the United States targeting invasive plants such as hydrilla and Eurasian Watermilfoil.

Fluridone is available in both liquid and pellet formulations. Both products require that plants be exposed to sufficient concentrations of Fluridone for an appropriate period of time. As a result, sequential Fluridone treatments, often called “bumps”, are usually applied over a period of time to ensure that an effective concentration of the herbicide is maintained. A commercial assay that measures Fluridone residue levels is available through the manufacturers of Fluridone and can be used to identify current concentrations of Fluridone to determine if further applications are necessary to maintain an effective concentration of the herbicide.

Fluridone is very flexible and can be used in systems of less than one acre and in systems that exceed several thousand acres. Regardless of the size of the treatment, target plants must be exposed to sufficient concentrations of Fluridone for an appropriate period of time in order to effectively control the target plant.

2.1.2 Suction Dredging

Diver suction dredging is a mechanical control technology for invasive aquatic plant removal that was pioneered by the British Columbia Ministry of Environment. During diver dredging operations, divers use venture pump systems (small gold mining dredges) to suction plants and roots from the sediment. The pumps are mounted on barges or pontoon boats and the diver uses their hand, or hand held tools with a cutter head, to remove plants from sediment. Plants are vacuumed through the hose to the support vessel where plants are retained in a basket and sediment and water are discharged to the water body. Often a silt curtain is deployed around the treatment site to control turbidity. This method can be effective depending on sediment conditions, density of aquatic plants, and underwater visibility. Early, low-level infestations can be effectively controlled with suction dredging.

2.1.3 Mechanical Control

The term “mechanical control” refers to control methods that use large power-driven equipment. Usually, boats are equipped with an underwater cutter bar that is used to “mow” and collect the plants from the top 4 to 10 feet of the water column. Rotovators are highly specialized aquatic roto-tillers. The rotovators’ head is lowered into the lake or river and “tills” the sediments, which chops up and cuts loose the submersed plants. A floating boom is usually placed around the work area while the rotovator spins on the aquatic bottom. Uprooted plants float to the surface and are removed from the surface by hand or mechanical means.

Harvesters are the most widely used types of equipment employed for mechanical control of aquatic noxious species in the U.S. Harvesters are powered by side-mounted paddle wheels which operate independently in forward or reverse. As a result, this equipment is highly maneuverable around docks and boat houses. The machines can operate in as little as 12 to 18 inches of water. Harvesters cut plants off at depths of up to 5 feet and in swaths of 8 feet wide with a hydraulically operated cutter head and convey the cut plants into a storage bay on the harvester. When the harvester is full, it offloads harvested plants onto a transport barge by

conveyer belt and the transporter takes the vegetation to shore, where it is dropped onto a conveyor to elevate the load to a truck for disposal.

Mechanical control is generally not recommended for use in Montana due to fragmentation and incomplete removal of plants and its parts, but it may be used for control in small areas around the lake.

2.1.4 Hand Removal

Hand harvesting or hand implements may be appropriate control methods on small segments of shoreline. Hand pulling and removal of rooted submersed plants is labor intensive, but can be effective on small populations. Plants must be removed from the site and disposed where they cannot contact the water. No specialized equipment is required in water less than three feet, but snorkeling equipment or SCUBA gear is necessary in deeper waters. Sediment type, visibility, and ability to remove the entire plant, including roots, determine success of hand removal control methods. Advantages of hand-pulling include immediate clearing of the water column with low environmental impact. Disadvantages include high cost and reduced visibility from the digging process, which interferes with divers' ability to detect plants.

2.1.5 Bottom Barriers

Bottom barriers are used for localized control of aquatic plants through compression and by blocking sunlight. Bottom barriers specifically manufactured for aquatic weed control are usually made from materials that are heavier than water such as PVC, fiberglass and nylon. Bottom barriers are usually anchored in place with a variety of fastening pins or anchoring devices. Some of the most common anchors being used are lengths of steel rebar encased in capped PVC pipes, which eliminates any sharp edges that could tear the barriers or be hazardous to swimmers. Sand bags, bricks and steel pins also are commonly used as anchors. Larger panels that are installed in water depths of greater than 4 feet usually require SCUBA divers for proper installation. Several different mechanisms have been devised to unroll the barriers in place during the installation process. Solid fabric barriers often need to be cut or vented to allow gasses to escape and to prevent billowing. Bottom barriers are usually used to control dense, pioneer infestations of an invasive species or as a maintenance weed control strategy around boat docks and swimming areas. Large installations (greater than one acre) are often impractical due to the high cost associated with purchasing, installing and maintaining the barrier. Bottom barriers should be left in place for a minimum of 1 to 2 months to ensure that target plants are controlled, but barriers must be regularly removed and cleaned of silt; otherwise plants may begin to root on top of or through the barriers. Removal, cleaning and re-deployment is usually required every 1 to 3 years depending on the rate of silt accumulation. Some lakes with volunteer divers have attached barriers to lightweight frames that facilitate rapid deployment and retrieval. Bottom barriers non-selectively control aquatic vegetation and may impact fish and other benthic organisms, which is another reason they are usually used for small localized areas. Many states require permits for the use of bottom barriers.

2.2 Alternative 2 - Lowering Lake Water Levels

Drawdown or the lowering of the water level can be used to effectively control a number of invasive submersed species. This technique is used mostly in the northern U.S. to expose targeted plants to freezing and drying conditions. Water is either gravity drained using a low-level gate valve or a removable flashboard system on a dam. A principal attraction of drawdown is that it is typically an inexpensive weed control strategy for lakes with a suitable outlet structure. However, annual drawdown programs can result in sediment compaction and changes in substrate composition. A drawdown also is utilized to provide protection from ice damage to docks and other shoreline structures and to allow for shoreline clean-up and repairs by lake residents. Plants that are usually controlled by drawdowns include many submersed species that reproduce primarily through vegetative means such as root structures and vegetative fragmentation. Some invasive submersed species most commonly targeted by drawdown include Eurasian Watermilfoil, fanwort, Egeria, Brazilian elodea and coontail.

A general rule of thumb is to maintain drawdown conditions for 6 to 8 weeks to ensure sufficient exposure to freezing and drying conditions. Excessive snow cover or precipitation can limit the effectiveness of this technique. Drawdowns are usually timed to begin during the fall months to avoid stranding amphibians, mollusks and other benthic organisms with limited mobility. Care must also be taken to leave enough water to support fish populations and avoid impacts during key spawning periods. Drawdowns can have negative impacts on adjacent wells and wetlands as well, so it is also important to know the downstream channel configuration, capacity and flow requirements. When properly utilized, drawdowns can be a low-cost or no-cost strategy to incorporate into an integrated management program. Many states require permits for drawdown programs.

Lowering the water level behind the Fort Peck Dam to expose, freeze, and kill patches of the plant in the dewatered areas was considered but dismissed from further consideration due to the massive size of the reservoir, the amount of water that would need to be released, and the timing that water must be held down.

2.3 Alternative 3 –No Federal Action

Under the No Federal Action alternative, no control of the noxious plant species would occur at the Fort Peak Project Area. The No Action alternative was eliminated from further consideration because if left unchecked, the Eurasian Watermilfoil would continue to grow and expand into new areas of the Lake, and negatively impact recreation, water quality, irrigation, fish and wildlife species, and the habitat upon which they depend.

3. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Water Quality

Fort Peck Lake is impounded by Fort Peck Dam on the Missouri River in McCone County, Montana and is used for flood control, hydroelectric power, irrigation, improved navigation and

recreation purposes. Construction of Fort Peck Dam was completed in 1957. At normal levels it has a surface area of 145 square miles.

Water quality management for the Fort Peck Project Area is under the jurisdiction of the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (Department). The Department develops water quality standards that designate the beneficial uses to be made of surface waters and the water quality criteria to protect the assigned uses. As required by Section 303(d) of the CWA, the Department must submit a list of lakes, wetlands, streams, rivers, and portions of rivers that do not meet state water quality standards (40 CFR 130.7). These are considered “impaired water bodies” and states are required to calculate total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for pollutants causing impairments in these waters. A TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can receive and still meet water quality standards (USEPA 2008a). Fort Peck Lake is on the state’s draft 303(d) list for flow alterations, a variety of heavy metals, noxious aquatic plants, nutrients, organic enrichment/low dissolved oxygen, and suspended solids. Fort Peck Lake’s designated uses include aquatic life support, drinking water supply, recreation, swimming, and warm water fishery.

3.2 Air Quality

McCone, Valley, Garfield, Phillips, Petroleum, and Fergus counties, Montana are in attainment with all National Ambient Air Quality Standards, which assess the levels of air pollutants such as ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, particulate matter, and lead.

3.3 Noise

Noise conditions in the Fort Peck Project Area vary depending on recreational usage. Because of the distance from populous areas and the limited access to some recreation areas, visitation at the Fort Peck Project Area is relatively low. The noise condition is, therefore, generally very low and characteristic of a natural setting where intrusion of man-made noise is infrequent and typically of short duration.

Some recreation activities with the potential to produce enough noise to disturb other recreationists include hunting, boat cruising, and waterskiing. Although off-road vehicle use is prohibited at Corps recreation areas, it is permitted on numbered roads adjacent to the lake. Thus, off-road vehicle noise may be a problem in areas adjacent to where it is permitted. Waterskiing and boat cruising typically occur throughout the Fort Peck Project Area. Powerboats are also used to transport hunting parties and sightseers to remote areas. Although recreational vehicle generator noise has generally not been a problem at Fort Peck, there have been some complaints of noise disturbing campers at remote low-density recreation areas. The posting of quiet hour signs at campgrounds seems to have reduced the noise complaints.

3.4 Wetlands

A National Wetlands Inventory map was checked for information regarding potential wetlands surrounding the proposed project areas. Several different wetlands occur at the Fort Peck Project. These include extensive open shallows of the lake, nearly barren beaches and sandbars, small ponds, and periodically flooded riparian areas.

The open shallows of the lake include open water areas that are less than 6 feet deep. These areas are found along the shoreline, especially in embayments, which are silting in, and in the natural river reach of the project between the Musselshell River and James Kipp Recreation Area. During periods of low water, barren beaches fringe most of the lake. Wetland vegetation becomes naturally established in isolated areas and requires areas that provide protection from waves. Established species include willows, cottonwood, and cattail. Areas with wetland vegetation cover include Hell Creek Bay, Gilbert Creek Bay, Musselshell Bay, and numerous small bays and inlets around the lake that are somewhat protected from high winds and excessive wave action.

A number of stock watering reservoirs were constructed in areas within and adjacent to the Fort Peck Project during the last 60 years by both the private sector and public agencies. However, many of these small ponds have washed out or are in need of maintenance work. When constructed in areas of suitable soils and upland vegetation types, these reservoir complexes have been productive for waterfowl. Many of the remaining reservoirs continue to provide an important contribution to waterfowl production and associated recreational opportunities. Periodically flooded riparian lands are located primarily in the upper reaches of the reservoir. These areas receive periods of natural flooding in the spring and all support stands of cottonwood and willow (with an understory of wheatgrass, bluestem, and needlegrass).

3.5 Aquatic Nuisance Vegetation

Aquatic nuisance species (ANS) is a legal definition for aquatic plants, animals and pathogens that when introduced into new ecosystems have harmful impacts in the way the ecosystem functions. ANS ultimately reduce the recreational and functional value of aquatic resources.

ANS have sprung up across Montana because of intentional and unintentional actions. Ballast water discharge from ships is the most significant source of unintentional introductions of ANS to U.S. coastal and estuarine waters. Although ballast water is not a problem specifically in Montana, animals, plants, and pathogens introduced into the United States through ballast water can then be transported to Montana via smaller watercraft or attachment to fishing gear. Other pathways by which ANS can be introduced include 1) water diversion allowing plants fragments or fish to enter new drainages, 2) importation of non-native species through the aquarium trade, and 3) the intentional and illegal release or input of non-native species into Montana waters.

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks has developed ANS priority classes to define the distribution and propagation of ANS species, and they are:

- Priority Class 1. These species are not known to be present in Montana, but have a high potential to invade and there are limited or no known management strategies for these species. Appropriate action for this class includes prevention of introductions and eradication of pioneering populations.

- Priority Class 2. These species are present and established in Montana and have the potential to spread further and there are limited or no known management strategies for these species. These species can be managed through actions that involve mitigation of impact, control of population size, and prevention of dispersal to other water bodies.

- Priority Class 3. These species are not known to be established in Montana and have a high potential for invasion and appropriate management techniques are available. Appropriate management for this class includes prevention of introductions and eradication of pioneering populations. Eurasian Watermilfoil falls into this class.

Eurasian Watermilfoil

Eurasian Watermilfoil roots in the sediment and grows completely underwater as a submersed plant that forms a dense canopy on the water surface. The species is commonly found in water from 1 to 15 feet in depth but can occur at depths of up to 30 feet if the water is extremely clear. Eurasian Watermilfoil is an evergreen perennial plant that produces persistent green shoots throughout the year and overwinters as root crowns. Leaves are pinnately compound (feather-like), with each leaf is composed of 14 to 24 pairs of leaflets arranged in whorls (groups) of four at the nodes of the stem. Stems and plant tips may appear reddish, but color is not consistent and may vary based on a number of factors, including environmental conditions. Flowers form on short aerial stems that hold them above the water and have both pollen-bearing (“male”) and seed-producing (“female”) flowers. Flowers are wind-pollinated and produce up to four nutlets per flower. Eurasian Watermilfoil is difficult to identify and is often confused with several native species of *Myriophyllum*, including northern watermilfoil (*M. sibiricum*) and whorled watermilfoil (*M. verticillatum*). Hybridization between Eurasian and northern watermilfoils reportedly occurs in the field and the seedlings produced from these cross-pollinations often have features that are intermediate to the parental plants.

Because Eurasian Watermilfoil grows entirely underwater as a submersed aquatic plant, the range of water depths the species can inhabit is limited by light penetration and water clarity. A dense canopy often forms at the surface of the water, which interferes with recreational uses of water such as boating, fishing and swimming. Dense growth of Eurasian Watermilfoil may also obstruct commercial navigation, exacerbate flooding or clog hydropower turbines. In addition, excessive growth of the species may alter aquatic ecosystems by decreasing native plant and animal diversity and abundance and by affecting the predator/prey relationships of fish among littoral plants. A healthy lake is easily damaged because heavy infestations of Eurasian Watermilfoil lower dissolved oxygen under the canopy, increase daily pH shifts, reduce water movement and wave action, increase sedimentation rates and reduce turbidity.

- Priority Class 4. These species are present and have the potential to spread in Montana, but there are management strategies available for these species. These species can be managed

through actions that involve mitigation of impact, control of population size, and prevention of dispersal to other water bodies.

3.6 Fish

The fishery resource at the Fort Peck project includes common sport fish such as northern pike (*Esox lucius*), walleye (*Stizostedion vitreum*), lake trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*), shovelnose sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus platyrhynchus*), sauger (*Stizostedion canadense*), smallmouth bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*), paddle fish (*Polyodon spathula*), Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), burbot (*Lota lota*), paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*), channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*), cisco (*Coregonus artedii*) and spottail shiners (*Notropis hudsonius*). The pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*), a federally listed endangered species, and the shovelnose sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus platyrhynchus*), a federally listed threatened species, also occurs in the lake.

3.7 Wildlife

At least 45 mammalian species inhabit the project area. These species range in size from shrews to Rocky Mountain elk.

The primary big game species in the region include mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) (over much of the project area) and some white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) (along the bottomlands adjacent to running streams). Mule deer exceed all other ungulate wildlife in number and distribution.

Common furbearing animals in the Fort Peck project area include beaver (*Castor canadensis*), mink (*Neovison vison*), muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*), badger (*Taxidea taxus*), and striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*). Predatory species include coyote (*Canis latrans*), fox (*Vulpes spp.*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), and weasel (*Mustela spp.*). Prairie dogs (*Cynomys spp.*), ground squirrels (*Spermophilus spp.*), porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*), jackrabbits (*Lepus spp.*), and cottontails (*Sylvilagus spp.*) can also be found on project lands.

The diverse habitat in the project area attracts a large variety of birds. Over 240 species have been recorded around Fort Peck, of which 41 percent nest locally, and 15 percent are year-round residents. Upland sandpipers (*Bartramia longicauda*), mountain plovers (*Charadrius montanus*), long-billed curlews (*Numenius americanus*), and burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia*) are among the more unique birds inhabiting the grassy bench lands; mountain plovers and burrowing owls are commonly associated with prairie dog towns in the area. Cottonwood trees partly inundated by the reservoir support rookeries of double-crested cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) and great blue herons (*Ardea herodias*), as well as nests of several pairs of osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*). Prairie falcons (*Falco mexicanus*) and golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) are common nesting residents on cliffs of the more rugged and inaccessible portions of the Missouri River Breaks.

The most common upland game bird in the project area is the sharp-tailed grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*). Sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), ring-necked pheasant

(*Phasianus colchicus*), and Hungarian partridge (*Perdix perdix*) are found in the area. Wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) also is present, but its distribution is limited.

Several species of nongame birds use the grasslands and woodlands on project lands as nesting habitats, a food source, or winter cover. Birds considered common in the area and occurring in large numbers during one or more seasons include red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*), northern harriers (*Circus cyaneus*), common nighthawks (*Chordeiles minor*), eastern kingbirds (*Tyrannus tyrannus*), prairie horned larks (*Eremophila alpestris*), bank swallows (*Riparia riparia*), blackbilled magpies (*Pica hudsonia*), pinyon jays (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*), mountain bluebirds (*Sialia currucoides*), bohemian waxwings (*Bombycilla garrulus*), and other songbirds.

Fort Peck is in the Central Flyway. Area waterfowl are both migratory and resident. Waterfowl that nest around Fort Peck include Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*), mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), northern pintails (*Anas acuta*), gadwalls (*Anas strepera*), green-winged teal (*Anas crecca*), American wigeons (*Anas americana*), ruddy ducks (*Oxyura jamaicensis*), and coots (*Fulica americana*). Several other species, such as the white-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons*), snow goose (*Chen caerulescens*), grebes (*Aechmophorus* spp., *Podiceps* spp., *Podilymbus podiceps*), merganser (*Mergus* spp., *Lophodytes cucullatus*), canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*), scaup (*Aythya affinis*), and other diving ducks, also use this area during their migrations.

The piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), a federally listed threatened species, and the interior least tern (*Sterna antillarum*), a federally listed endangered species, also are found in the area.

Amphibians and reptiles in the area are somewhat limited in terms of species diversity. Amphibians are uncommon around Fort Peck, but the tiger salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*), Great Plains toad (*Bufo cognatus*), leopard frog (*Rana pipiens*), and bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*) do occur. The only venomous snake in the project area is the prairie rattler (*Crotalus viridis*). Other snakes that occur in the area are the western garter snake (*Thamnophis* spp.), the bull snake (*Pituophis catenifer sayi*), and the western hognose snake (*Heterodon nasicus*). The snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) and a species of painted turtle (*Chrysemys picta*) also occur in the region, but are not common.

3.8 Federally Threatened and Endangered Species

In accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) web page (<http://www.fws.gov/montanafieldoffice>) for listed species occurring in Montana was consulted to determine which federally listed threatened or endangered species could potentially occur in the proposed project areas. The following listed species were found as occurring at Fort Peck: the endangered black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*), the endangered interior least tern (*Sterna antillarum*), the endangered pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*), the threatened shovelnose sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus platyrhynchus*), the threatened piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), and the endangered whooping crane (*Grus americanus*).

3.9 Cultural Resources

The Fort Peck Project Area is rich in cultural resources. Although most of the land surrounding the Fort Peck Project Area has not been surveyed for cultural resources, known sites consist of lithic scatters, bison kill sites and corrals, tipi rings, stone effigies, campsites, Lewis and Clark campsites, trails, early homesteaders' cabins, hunting cabins, stage routes, railroads, shanty towns from the dam construction era, and other construction camp era buildings. These sites are associated with the Gros Ventre, the Assiniboine bands of Canoe Paddler and Red Bottom, the Sioux divisions of Sisseton/Wahpetons, the Yantonais, and the Heton Hunkpapa, the Blackfoot, early Euro American explorers, homesteaders, and New Deal employees during the Fort Peck Dam construction.

As of 2003, 82 historic sites were recorded in the Fort Peak area. Two are listed on the NRHP, three are considered eligible for the NRHP, 56 are unevaluated against NRHP criteria, 21 have been determined not eligible, and one site is reportedly destroyed. Out of these sites, 27 are in recreation areas, and 55 are within the wildlife refuge. Data recovery and mitigation of portions of the NRHP sites has been undertaken. There is currently one National Register District located in the project area.

All native cultural resources in the Fort Peck Project Area are considered important to the tribes. Therefore, monitoring for construction activities, recreation, erosion, vandalism, artifact collecting, and agricultural encroachment is undertaken. Corps personnel and contractors, with the assistance of tribal members, monitor various threats to the integrity of cultural resources on a regular basis. Those sites on the NRHP are first priority, sites eligible for the NRHP are second priority, sites with an unknown NRHP status are third priority, and any sites reportedly destroyed will be confirmed as such.

3.10 Recreation

The Fort Peck project area has an abundance of natural and scenic resources that make resource-based outdoor recreation activities such as fishing, wildlife viewing, camping, hunting, boating, and swimming possible.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

4.1 Preferred Alternative

4.1.1 Water Quality

The proposed alternative would use various methods to control Eurasian Watermilfoil. Chemical applications, if used according to the label instructions, would not result in any long term adverse affects to water quality. Dissipation of the herbicides would be rapid: between a few hours to a few days. In this case, the short-term water quality affects of herbicide application are conducted under a permitted and controlled situation where the resultant outcome is of higher beneficial use to the overall health of the aquatic ecosystem than any short term adverse effects generated by such chemical use. The other methods would remove the noxious

plant and provide for a more natural environment and thereby increase water quality. As such, short term affects to water quality are not considered significant and are actually beneficial.

4.1.2 Air Quality

Herbicide application involved in the control of Eurasian Watermilfoil is not expected to have an appreciable effect on air quality because of the small size of the areas treated, the amount of herbicide used, the mode of application, and the rapid dilution of herbicides in the air. Suction dredging and mechanical control would have a minimal effect on air quality as a result of the use of combustion engines. The other methods would have no effects on air quality. As such, effects on air quality are not considered significant.

4.1.3 Noise

Suction dredging and mechanical control would have a minimal effect on noise as a result of the use of combustion engines. The other control methods would result in no increase in noise over existing conditions. Noise created during noxious species control is not considered significant.

4.1.4 Wetlands

Herbicide application would assist in preventing the spread of Eurasian Watermilfoil resulting in protection of wetlands and wetland plants. There is a minimal risk that native non-target plants may be impaired and/or killed by the herbicide application. However, these direct effects would most likely be localized and short-term. The short-term effects to non-target plants would be offset by long-term benefits of the treatment and reduced spread of Eurasian Watermilfoil. Emergent plants or wetlands plants bordering the treated area also could be exposed. There may be some drifting of herbicide into other wetland communities or flow of 'contaminated' water into these areas. However, it is unlikely the impact would be measurable due to dilution effects of the herbicides and the mode of application. Direct and indirect effects would be minimized by properly applying the herbicides. Overall, the Proposed Action is likely to benefit wetlands and wetland plants in the area by keeping habitat free of the aquatic weeds. The other methods would have no adverse impacts on wetland plants and would result in similar benefits to wetlands and wetland plant as described above.

4.1.5 Aquatic Nuisance Vegetation

Herbicide application would assist in preventing the spread of Eurasian Watermilfoil resulting in protection of the areas native fish, wildlife, and plant communities. The other methods would similarly reduce the spread of Eurasian Watermilfoil and protect native species. The control of noxious species would be considered beneficial.

4.1.6 Fish

Herbicide application could affect fish and their habitat through direct impacts from chemical applications or post-treatment alteration of habitat. The herbicides potentially used in the

Proposed Action include Diquat, endothall, 2,4,D, Triclopyr or Fluridone. All of these herbicides have been researched extensively and approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These herbicides are accepted as safe as long as they are administered within the recommended application rates and procedures. Fish would likely detect disturbance in the control areas and seek alternative locations, thereby minimizing any adverse affects. The other control methods likely would have no adverse impacts on fish except for those that prefer dense stands of vegetation. Eliminating the Eurasian Watermilfoil would allow native stands of vegetation to colonize and thereby replace the noxious plants used by those fish. The proposed control of the noxious plant would be considered beneficial to fish species.

4.1.7 Wildlife

Herbicide application could impact area wildlife if they come into direct contact with treated water. The likelihood of this occurring is small due to the isolated treatment areas and the rapid dissipation and mixing of the applied herbicides. In the event that contaminated water does come into contact with wildlife, long-term health impacts would be very unlikely. All herbicides would be strictly administered under the manufacturer's recommendations. Based on the short-lived nature of these compounds under normal oxidizing environments and exposure to sunlight, any short term health risks to wildlife or adverse environmental effects with the application of these herbicides would not be expected to occur. Many studies have been run on these products to ensure their safety to wildlife and the label directions and warnings reflect the results of those studies. Therefore, if the herbicides are applied according to the label, the effect on terrestrial wildlife would be minimal and not significant.

4.1.8 Federally Threatened and Endangered Species

The Proposed Action would not pose unique impacts to threatened, endangered and sensitive wildlife species within the proposed control areas. The direct and indirect impacts are the same as those discussed above for fish and wildlife. The Proposed Action likely would have no effect on threatened or endangered wildlife within the control areas.

4.1.9 Cultural Resources

The Proposed Action would not pose any impacts to cultural resources. However, if a discovery is made during construction, all activity would be halted around the discovery site and the contractor would notify a Corps archaeologist who would in turn inform the South Dakota State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) of the discovery. The Corps archaeologist would examine the discovery area as soon as possible and then consult with the South Dakota SHPO about the nature and National Register of Historic Places eligibility of the area prior to resumption of any activity near the site. For these reasons, the proposed project is not likely to adversely impact cultural resources.

4.1.10 Recreation

Under the Proposed Action, control of Eurasian Watermilfoil would be conducted throughout the Fort Peck Project Area where infestations have occurred. Control of Eurasian Watermilfoil

would maintain access to boating, fishing, and swimming areas where water resource activities may become restricted in the future if the rapid spread and infestation of this species is not controlled. The Proposed Action is expected to have a direct positive impact on recreational use in the area. The herbicides selected for control are not expected to cause adverse impacts to recreational activities such as fishing, boating, or swimming. Recreational use may be temporarily inconvenienced during application of the herbicides or during the other control methods used.

There is a slight potential for direct effects to recreational users. These effects could result from chemical exposure through contact, ingestion, or inhalation during activities such as boating, fishing, or swimming. To mitigate for this potential effect proper signage and notices in treatment and adjacent areas would be posted. A 24-hour swimming and fishing advisory would be posted in treated areas. Swimming and fishing outside the treatment area would not have any restrictions. Boaters would be advised to wait until the application is completed before entering any treated areas. Indirect effects post-treatment could occur due to different dissipation rates of the herbicides. Dissipation half-life for the proposed herbicides in water has been shown to vary from less than one day to a few days. Studies of spot treatments at Lake Seminole for control of Eurasian Watermilfoil did not detect herbicides at sites located more than 1.5 Km (~5000 feet) downstream. Control of Eurasian Watermilfoil would greatly benefit recreational activities.

4.2 No Action Alternative

With the No Action alternative, no control of Eurasian Watermilfoil would be conducted. No direct impacts to air quality, terrestrial wildlife, or threatened and endangered species would occur. Additionally, no increase in noise in the area would result. However, water quality would likely be impacted through the spread of the noxious plant. The water quality of the lake would be diminished through lower dissolved oxygen levels, increased pH, increased sedimentation rates and reduced turbidity as wave action become limited. Adverse impacts to wetlands would result from the continued spread of this species. Over time, species diversity in surrounding wetlands could change and the abundance of native aquatic plants could diminish. Eurasian Watermilfoil would likely out-compete native species for space and nutrients. Fish could be adversely affected through Eurasian Watermilfoil infestation which would limit fish habitat diversity and alter normal feeding, breeding, and sheltering. Recreational opportunities and activities at Fort Peck Project Area would likely be directly impacted if a concerted effort to control Eurasian Watermilfoil did not occur. An indirect effect of failure to control floating beds of aquatic weeds from swimming areas could result in swimmers being entangled in the floating beds and potentially resulting in drowning or injury. Boat motors could become entangled within the floating beds and the floating beds of aquatic weeds could serve as breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

5. Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects are those that result from the incremental effects of the action when added to past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions within a region. Analysis of cumulative effects for the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Alternative are provided below.

No Action Under the No Action Alternative, water quality would continue to diminish, wetlands would be encroached upon, fish would lose valuable sheltering and breeding areas, native aquatic vegetation would likely be out-competed in the areas of space and nutrients, and recreation would be greatly reduced, resulting in lost tax revenue. The No Action Alternative would eventually degrade the Fort Peck aquatic environment.

Proposed Alternative With the Proposed Alternative, water quality within the lake and in other areas would be protected as Eurasian Watermilfoil is controlled. Wetlands would be protected as native species thrive. Fish would be allowed to conduct their normal feeding, breeding, and sheltering absent the large stand of the noxious species. Recreation in the lake could continue to the delight of boaters, swimmers, and fishermen.

Prepared By: Matthew D. Vandenberg
Matthew D. Vandenberg
Environmental Resources Specialist

Date: May 5, 2011

Approved By: Brad Thompson
Brad Thompson
Chief, Environmental Resources and Missouri River
Recovery Program and Plan Formulation Section

Date: May 5, 2011

Compliance with Environmental Statutes

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668, 668 note, 669a-668d. *In compliance.* This Act prohibits the taking or possession of and commerce in bald and golden eagles, with limited exceptions for the scientific or exhibition purposes, for religious purposes of Indian tribes, or for the protection of wildlife, agriculture or preservation of the species. The Corps has, and will continue, to coordinate with the USFWS and the appropriate state agencies to avoid taking the species during construction activities, and will follow the USFWS's guidelines regarding eagle nests.

Clean Air Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C 1857h-7, et seq. *In compliance.* Air quality is not expected to be impacted to any measurable degree by Eurasian Watermilfoil control activities associated with the proposed project.

Clean Water Act, as amended, (Federal Water Pollution Control Act) 33 U.S.C. 1251, et seq. *In compliance.* The objective of this Act is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters (33 U.S.C. 1251). The Corps regulates discharges of dredge or fill material into waters of the United States pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. This permitting authority applies to all waters of the United States including navigable waters and wetlands. The proposed application of all herbicides would be in accordance with label instructions. All appropriate permits, including Section 401 and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act would be obtained prior to use of any control methods to ensure water quality is maintained.

Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). *Not applicable.* Typically CERCLA is triggered by (1) the release or substantial threat of a release of a hazardous substance into the environment; or (2) the release or substantial threat of a release of any pollutant or contaminant into the environment which presents an imminent threat to the public health and welfare. To the extent such knowledge is available, 40 CFR Part 373 requires notification of CERCLA hazardous substances in a land transfer. This project would not involve any real estate transactions.

Endangered Species Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1531, et seq. *In compliance.* The Corps sent an email, dated March 23, 2011, to the USFWS stating that the proposed project likely would have "no affect" on listed species. The USFWS's Montana Ecological Services Field Office replied on the same day to the Corps on stating they had no comments to provide.

Environmental Justice (E.O. 12898). *In compliance.* Federal agencies shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States. The project does not disproportionately impact minority or low-income populations.

Farmland Protection Policy Act (Subtitle I of Title XV of the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981), effective August 6, 1984. *In compliance.* Compliance with this act also will satisfy the requirements set forth in Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Memorandum of August 11,

1980, Analysis of impacts on Prime or Unique Agricultural Lands in Implementing NEPA. This project would not involve the conversion of prime farmland to non-agricultural use.

Federal Water Project Recreation Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 460-1(12), et seq. *In compliance.* The implementation of the proposed project would benefit recreational use of the lake.

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act. 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq. *In compliance.* The FWCA requires governmental agencies, including the Corps, to coordinate activities so that adverse affects of fish and wildlife will be minimized when water bodies are proposed for modification. The Fort Peck Project Area will be modified in a beneficial way as part of this project. The Corps sent an email, dated March 23, 2011, to the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks stated that a SPA 124 Permit and a 318 Authorization would be required. These requirements will be obtained prior to commencement of work and applied for by the Fort Peck Office.

Floodplain Management (E.O. 11988). *Not applicable.* This Executive Order does not apply because there would be no alteration of water through the flood plain.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 as amended, 16 U.S.C. 703-711, et seq. *In compliance.* The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA) is the domestic law that affirms, or implements, the United States commitment to four international conventions with Canada, Japan, Mexico and Russia for the protection of shared migratory bird resources. The MBTA governs the taking, killing, possession, transportation, and importation of migratory birds, their eggs, parts and nests. The take of all migratory birds is governed by the MBTA's regulation of taking migratory birds for educational, scientific, and recreational purposes and requiring harvest to be limited to levels that prevent over utilization. Executive Order 13186 (2001) directs executive agencies to take certain actions to implement the act. The Corps will avoid impacts to migratory birds, and their nests.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as amended, 42 U.S.C. 4321, et seq. *In compliance.* This environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact (FONSI) has been prepared for the proposed action.

National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 470, et seq. *Not applicable.* Federal agencies having direct or indirect jurisdiction over a proposed Federal or Federally assisted undertaking shall take into account the effect of the undertaking on any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The proposed project would not affect cultural resources.

Noise Control Act of 1972, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 4901 to 4918. *In compliance.* This Act establishes a national policy to promote an environment for all Americans free from noise that jeopardizes their health and welfare. Federal agencies are required to limit noise emissions to within compliance levels. Noise emission levels at the project sites will temporarily increase above current levels due to dredge operations; however, appropriate measures will be taken to keep the noise level within compliance levels (e.g., performing work during daylight hours, avoiding idling of machinery when not in use, etc.).

Protection of Wetlands (E.O.11990). *In compliance.* The proposed project would not require the placement of fill in any wetlands.

Rivers and Harbors Act, 33 U.S.C. 401, et seq. *Not applicable.* A Section 10 permit is not required for Corps projects.

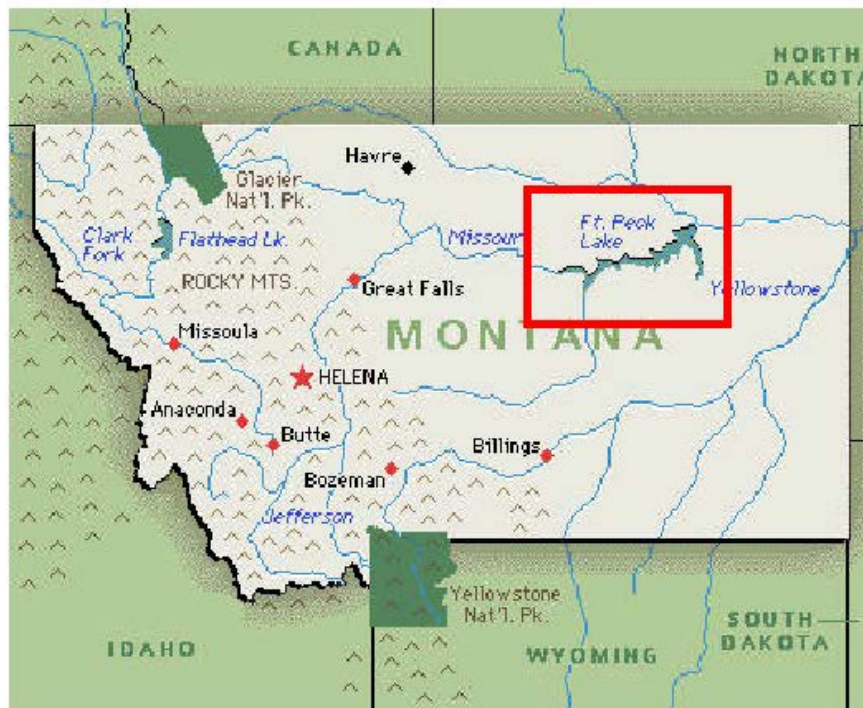
Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, 16 U.S.C. 1101, et seq. *In compliance.* The contractor will provide the Corps or the Fort Peak Project Office with an erosion and sedimentation control plan. Best Management Practices will be implemented to minimize potential turbidity issues during Eurasian Watermilfoil control (silt fences, as required, etc.).

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1271, et seq. *Not applicable.* The area in which the proposed activity would occur is not a wild or scenic river, nor is it in an area potentially eligible for inclusion in the wild and scenic system.

Project Maps

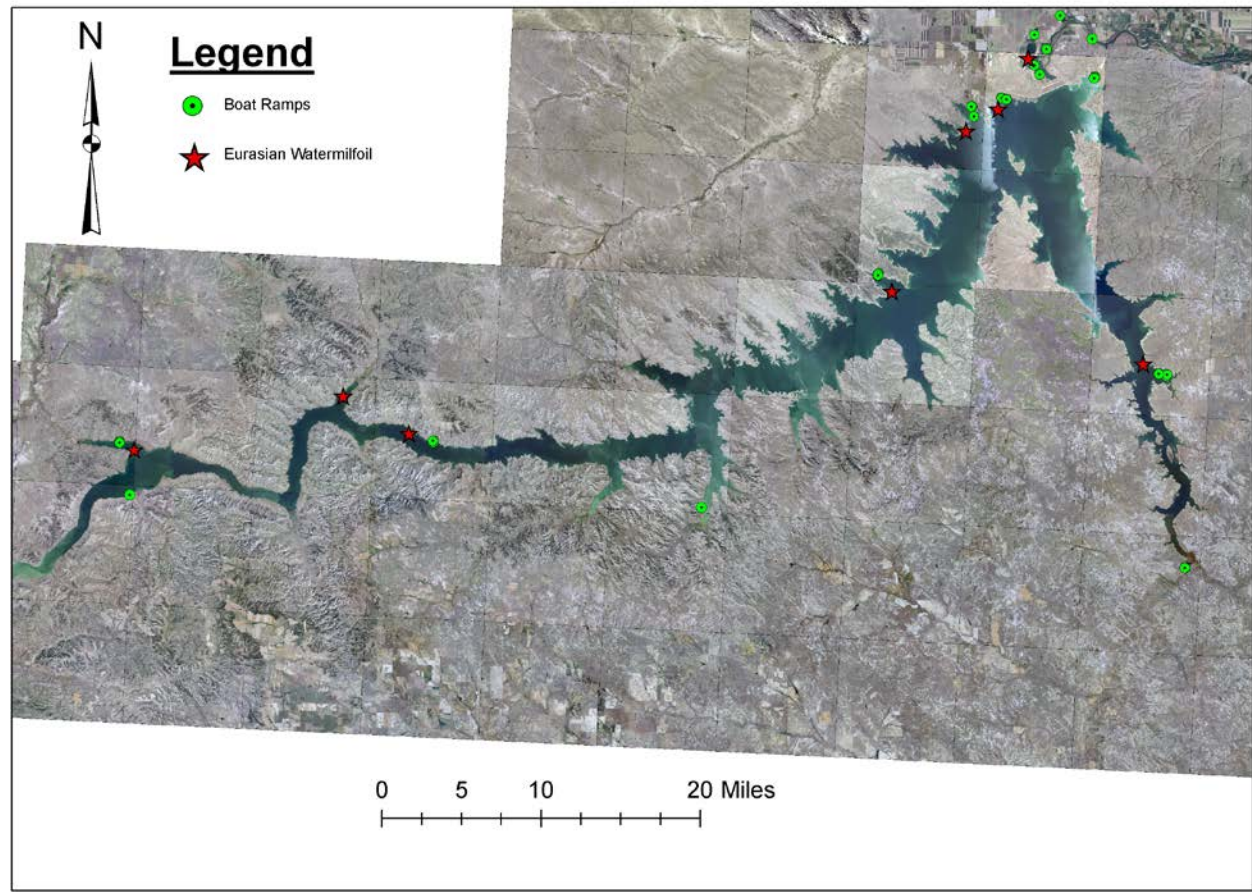


Montana, U.S.A.



Fort Peck Lake, Montana

Fort Peck Eurasian Watermilfoil



Locations of known Eurasian Watermilfoil include Pines Recreation Area Boat Ramp, Fort Peck Marina Boat Ramp, Rock Creek Boat Ramp, Timber Creek Bay, Bone Trail Boat Ramp, Fourchette Bay Boat Ramp, Duck Creek Boat Ramp, and Fort Peck Dredge Cut.

Agency Coordination

Vandenberg, Matthew D NWO

From: Vandenberg, Matthew D NWO
Sent: Friday, March 25, 2011 9:38 AM
To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Eurasian Watermilfoil at Fort Peck Project
Attachments: Milfoil_NEPA.doc

Team,

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is seeking to control a Class 3 Noxious Plant - Eurasian Watermilfoil at the Fort Peck Project Area using a variety of control methods such as herbicide treatments, suction dredging, mechanical control, hand removal, and/or bottom barriers as described in the attached DRAFT Environmental Assessment (EA).

The proposed project would likely have beneficial affects to threatened and endangered species as well as other resident and migratory fish and wildlife species. Additionally, the proposed project would likely benefit area water quality and recreation such as boating, swimming, fishing, and wildlife viewing.

Please review the attached EA and provide comments or suggestions as required. Thanks in advance for your assistance in this matter.

Matthew D. Vandenberg
Environmental Resources Specialist
Corps of Engineers, Omaha District
1616 Capitol Avenue
Omaha, Nebraska 68102-4901
Phone: [REDACTED]

Vandenberg, Matthew D NWO

From: Vandenberg, Matthew D NWO
Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2011 7:43 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Eurasian Watermilfoil Environmental Assessment
Attachments: Milfoil_NEPA.doc

Gentlemen:

The Corps of Engineers would like to begin to control a Category 3 Noxious Weed (Eurasian Watermilfoil) in Fort Peck Lake. We will be using various methods such as herbicide treatment, hand pulling, suction dredging, and possibly mechanical control in limited areas since its use is not recommended in the state of Montana.

The proposed project would likely have no effect to listed species but we would still appreciate your review and input on the attached Environmental Assessment. Thanks in advance for your quick review.

Matthew D. Vandenberg
Environmental Resources Specialist
Corps of Engineers, Omaha District
1616 Capitol Avenue
Omaha, Nebraska 68102-4901
Phone: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Vandenberg, Matthew D NWO

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2011 9:20 AM
To: Vandenberg, Matthew D NWO
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: No Comment on Ft. Peck Eurasian Watermilfoil Environmental Assessment
Attachments: pic29318.gif; Milfoil_NEPA.doc; grayool.gif; ecblank.gif

Matthew: Thank you for checking with us on this matter. The Montana Ecological Services Field Office does not intend to provide comments on this project due to a lack of staff to assign to review it, and the need to assign the staff currently on-board to projects of higher priority. We appreciate you offering us the opportunity to review this project proposal.

Thank you, again.

Mark

R. Mark Wilson, Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division of Ecological Services
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601-6287
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

"You will find as you grow older that courage is the rarest of all qualities to be found in public life." - B. Disraeli- Former British Prime Minister Inactive hide details for "Vandenberg, Matthew D NWO" [REDACTED] Vandenberg, Matthew D NWO"
[REDACTED]

"Vandenberg, Matthew D NWO" [REDACTED]

03/23/2011 06:44 AM

To:

Cc:

Subject:

Eurasian Watermilfoil Environmental Assessment

Gentlemen:

1

Vandenberg, Matthew D NWO

From: Vandenberg, Matthew D NWO
Sent: Friday, March 25, 2011 9:18 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Application for Permits
Attachments: Joint_Application_Form.pdf; Milfoil_NEPA.doc

Jim/Todd:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers seeks to control Eurasian Watermilfoil at the Fort Peck Project Area. Various eradication techniques such as herbicide treatments, suction dredging, mechanical control, hand removal, and/or bottom barriers are proposed and are described in the attached EA.

Based on these control methods, the Corps wishes to obtain a SPA 124 Permit, Section 404 Authorization, and 318 Authorization as requested on the attached Joint Application Form.

Please contact Patricia Gilbert, Natural Resource Specialist at the Fort Peck Project office or me if you have any questions or need additional information. Thanks for your assistance in this matter.

Matthew D. Vandenberg
Environmental Resources Specialist
Corps of Engineers, Omaha District
1616 Capitol Avenue
Omaha, Nebraska 68102-4901
Phone: [REDACTED]